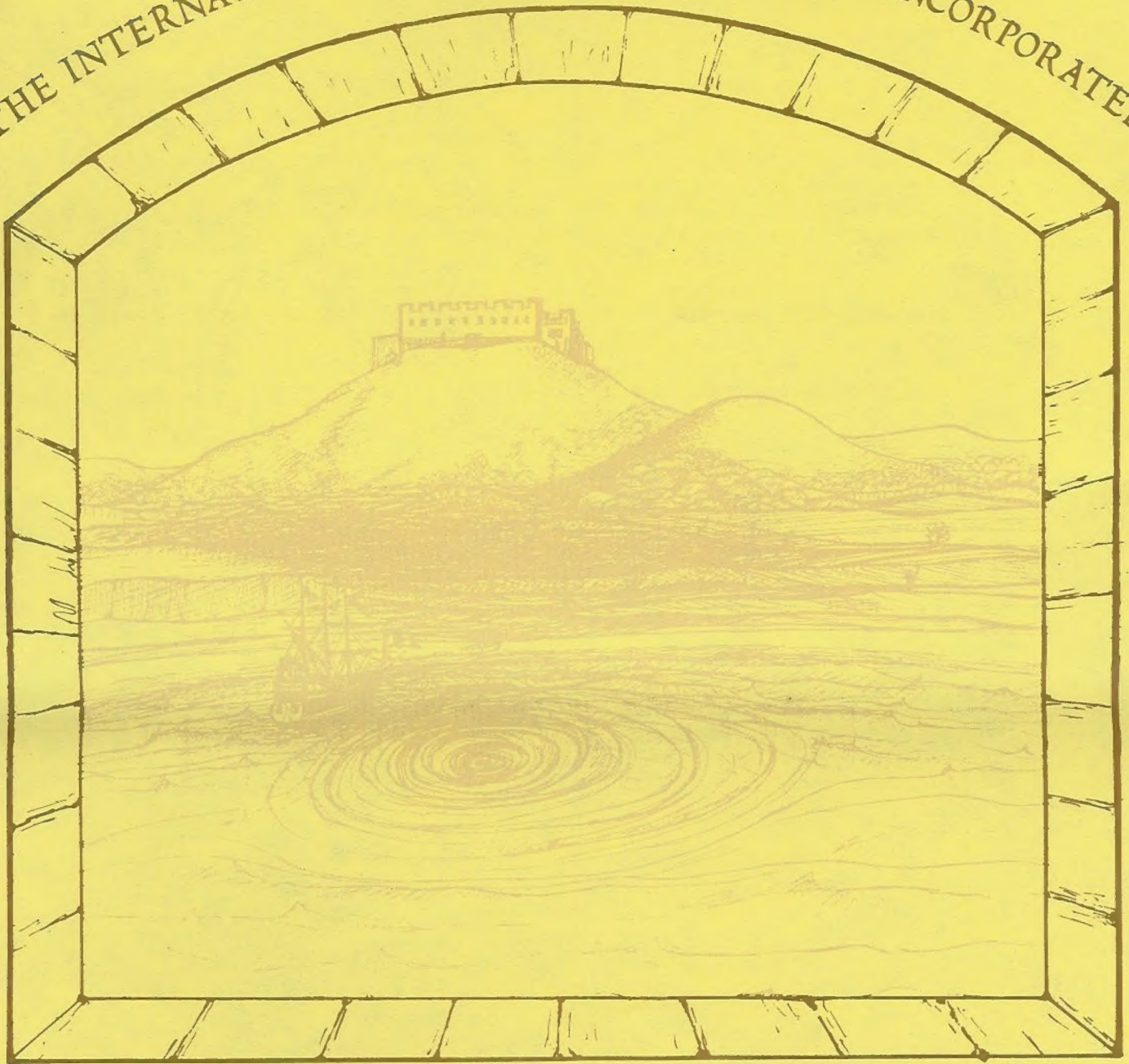


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PLANE III

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40

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DEVOTED TO THE ADVANCEMENT AND MYSTICAL ENLIGHTENMENT OF MAN

Dear Companions:

I had begun to put this Liber together -- choosing particular lectures -- when I suddenly realized it was Liber 40. Liber 40! And I remember doing the very first one not so long ago! The days that have passed since then have been very special ones for us. When we first began we had no idea just where the path would lead or how appreciated our efforts would be -- however, as the time has passed, the fact that we seldom record any "drop outs" from brethren who step on to Plane III provides us with that answer.

As you know, we are not the authors of all the material we dispense, in fact we are the authors of very little of it. Almost all the lectures we distribute have been entrusted to us from certain traditional brotherhoods and our job is simply to try to arrange it in as interesting and beneficial a way as we can -- and make it available to those who are seeking the Light.

It is most gratifying to us that our efforts are being well received and we thank everyone who makes this Work possible.

So here we are at Liber 40! Forty is something of a special number is'nt it? It seems to indicate maturity and the completion of a test, or a phase of activity, as is noticed in the Bible where many situations came to a conclusion after 40 days or 40 years.

We thought we would mark this occasion then, with something "special", and it is our very great pleasure to share with you a lecture that was given to the Alchemical Society in England in 1913 by Mme. Isabelle de Steiger and a related item from the F.R.C.. We have opted to present them in their original form and trust Companions will find this acceptable.

Brethren, please accept my salutations. I pray that both your outer understanding and interior development will continue to grow and we **thank you** for the opportunity to be of service.

On behalf of all of us here at Headquarters.

Sincerely in the Work

Saccer

For notice of next year's meetings see inside cover.

Vol. II. Part 7.

November, 1913.

The
Journal
of the
Alchemical Society

Edited by

H. Stanley Redgrove, B.Sc. (Lond.), F.C.S.

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EDITED BY H. STANLEY REDGROVE. B.Sc. (LOND.), F.C.S.

VOL. II. PART 7.

NOVEMBER, 1913.

REPORT OF SEVENTH GENERAL MEETING.

THE seventh General Meeting of THE ALCHEMICAL SOCIETY was held at 8.15 p.m., on Friday, November 14th., at The International Club, Regent Street, S.W. The chair was occupied by the Acting President, Mr. H. Stanley Redgrove, B.Sc., F.C.S.

A paper was read by Mme. Isabelle de Steiger on "The Hermetic Mystery," which was followed by a discussion. (The paper and an abstract of the discussion are printed in the present number of the JOURNAL).

A vote of thanks was passed to Mme. I. de Steiger for her paper.

The Honorary Secretary announced the names of new members.

THE HERMETIC MYSTERY.

By ISABELLE DE STEIGER.

IN this paper I shall endeavour to give you, as far as I can, some idea of what is meant, or what I mean, by the title—"The Hermetic Mystery." This word "Mystery" does not imply quite the same as "Doctrine," but practically, as you will see, the one is included within the other.

The Hermetic Mystery refers to the Art of Alchemy, "The Royal Art," as this science is described.

The Hermetic Doctrine implies those connate philosophical and religious concepts, required to be held and put into practice by alchemists.

Broadly speaking, I may say I consider it is that primitive heavenly doctrine underlying all formulated religions; but as Alchemy comes more directly through Christian sources, I use the word "Christian" as more especially explanatory of the religious views of Western alchemists.

In these days of the great expansion of knowledge concerning comparative religions, it will not be necessary to enquire as to the relation between the religion of the Western alchemists and of their Eastern brother-artists.

Please note the use of the word "artist." We say that the poet, artist, and doctor, are born, not made. The same assertion is true of the alchemist. And I would like here explicitly to remark that I find that Professor Bergson's idea of intuitive intelligence exactly covers much of the

meaning of the alchemists as to mental requisites, such as intuition or understanding to grasp the situation, intelligence plus instinct to make and use the tools required for the work, that being for the purpose of creating, as an artist creates, an already conceived idea, which idea can only be manifested to other eyes by means of the tools he uses in order to demonstrate it. Here, a very strange thing may be noted with regard to tools, for in the case of Alchemy, the first tools that man could ever, and must for ever use, were and are his hands. "Thine own right hand can save thee," we read in *The Book of Job* (Ch. ~~XL~~, v. 14). *XL. v 14*

I will begin with the first of my affirmations, which is, that in the Hermetic Mystery, lies the *Art of Alchemy*, and proceed to say that the subject on which this Art was practised was *Nature*: not nature in general, but nature in particular, in a word, on nothing else than man himself. It was understood by the Sages that man was "demonstrated to be a compendium of the whole created nature (Kabalistically called a microcosm) and was generated to become wise, and have dominion over the whole of things, having within him, besides those faculties, which he exerts ordinarily—the germ of a higher faculty or wisdom, which, when revealed and set alone, all the forms of things and hidden springs of nature became intuitively known and are implied essentially." [*A Suggestive Enquiry into the Hermetic Mystery and Alchemy*, 1850, p. 155.] Man, therefore, is the subject of the Hermetic Mystery, and the Royal Art is that Art which reveals and "sets alone" the germ of Universal Wisdom. This germ is called the Pearl of Great Price.

The work on *Superhumanity*, which I am bringing out as a serial in *The Path*, deals with the duality (inevitably pre-existent in the first move from homogeneity) subsisting in man from birth, inasmuch as he has a germ of death (the *gluten* of Eckartshausen), as well as the germ of life, in his heart, that is in his blood. The germ of death has to be eradicated in its special organ, the body, which is the task for present day medical art, since this works from secondary causes; but the art of revealing and bringing to the light of day the Pearl of Great Price, is the Hermetic Art.

My second affirmation is that the *first matter* from and out of which the Philosopher's Stone is differentiated is truly the *Cosmic Ether*. No doubt you will say that that term is too general or vague. What, I shall be asked, do I mean by "Ether" or by "first matter"? By "ether," the alchemists meant a certain matter; they called it "a substance," as opposed to any notion of mere existence derivable from some prior cause; "Substance" to them implying causation and potency; "matter" or "existence" signifying effect, dependent on prior cause. They considered ether to be that *primo materia* out of which all things, man himself included, was made, signifying thereby the "nothing" that Theology calls

the "dust of the Earth." This is the "First Matter" containing all existent matter. Thus "the dust of the Earth" meant to the alchemists undifferentiated Cosmic Ether, holding potentially all forms, shapes, destinies, varieties of all things and in all kingdoms.

The ancient and mediæval alchemists held that the elements, fire, earth, water, were but constituents of the Ether, not one being simple, i.e., consisting of only one element, but partaking of each other; and when they meant to speak particularly of a quality of the Ether, they described it indifferently as fire, dryness, heat, light, etc. By "air" they never meant only the immediate atmosphere, which we inhale. They said also that no one quality was unmixed. Consequently they used the terms with confusing, apparent indifference, but if one reads into their descriptions the words "Cosmic Ether," to mean the One Thing, when they described a dozen, the clue to the labyrinth gets firmer in one's hand.

"Universal Spirit" is also a term representative of the Alchemical Essence. It is mentioned by Mr. Pattison Muir, in his *The Story of Alchemy and the Beginnings of Chemistry* (1902). Sendivogius is certainly not referring to water, or at least to our water, when he speaks of the "solvent of the world," but is describing the Cosmic Ether. He says, writing as an alchemist:—It "is the solvent of the world, and exists in three degrees of excellence: the pure, the purer and the purest. Of its purest substance the heavens were created; of that which is less pure the atmospheric air was formed; that which is simply pure remains in its proper sphere, where, by the Will of God, and the co-operation of Nature, it is guardian of all subtle substances here below." [*The New Chemical Light*, see *The Hermetic Museum*, ed. by A. E. Waite, (1893), vol. II., p. 133.] The simply pure Ether is referred by the alchemists to all earthly things. The word "substance," as I have indicated, is used by them to imply reality, causality, permanence, self-motion, immortality, etc. A substance to them was not described by weight, immobility, solidity, ponderability or any of the usual qualities, which we now regard as attributes of substance. The true substance, they taught, energizes behind, beyond, yet also within, all existence. The "First Matter," to them, was purest substance, emanating with vibrational energy, in inexhaustible supply and source, from the great Universal Life. This "First Matter" is that which informs and pervades all things here below, enduing man himself and all nature with life.

The Universal Life has God for its Source; it is, indeed, none other than His Breath. The Vedanta and the Bible both tell us the world and ourselves live and breathe by, in and through God. This Universal Life has for its conducting channel and medium, the Cosmic Ether. Its divine condition

is however such that unless adulterated with less pure Ether man, since his fall, could not live in it, for the purest Ether can kill, as well as cause life. We have its analogy in the phenomena of radioactivity. The Greek name for the purest Ether is *Eleuthera*.

The purer Ether, which is called the "Free," "Sideral" or "Astral Ether," gives life in another degree to our Souls, and according as it energizes in each of us do we all differ temperamentally from one another.

Now I come to the third and lowest, or merely pure, Ether, which is our Cosmic Ether, in which we directly live and breathe. This is not free: it is bound and attainable, from and out of which are extracted those qualities of Ether known to us as magnetism, electricity, radioactivity, etc.

The ground of the alchemists was this, that man being body, soul and spirit, he must hold within himself the three degrees of Ether or Universal Life. They believed that man was meant to be an immortal, perfect being, that he was so once, but that owing to circumstances, which in western Theology we briefly term the Fall, the *Eleuthera* or source of immortality and life itself, is no longer paramount in man, on the contrary, being latent, dormant, and though inextinguishable, it is, as far as man can benefit by it, so latent that it is as useless to him as is the outer shell of the oyster to the pearl seeker.

They said that within man lies life and immortality, and yet man as he is, is described by them also as a mere elemental, weak creature subject physically as much now as ever, to the power of the elements, also to evil, death and corruption. They called him a fragile, porous, impermanent being, but they maintained that God did not create such condition, and that it is man's ignorance that keeps him in slavery to his outer and unreal self.

Now, some men greatly daring, but in true humility, found a method by which they could recover the buried treasure, and once more breathe directly and not indirectly from God. This Great Art of Recovery, the refinding of the lost Jewel, the true Life of man, is the Art of Alchemy, —the search after the jewel or the method to perfect nature.

Now I must attempt to say in what that Art consists. We have seen that the alchemists affirmed that man was once illuminated with all Wisdom, and that he was once immortal. They knew that no corruptible elements could be immortal. I refer especially here to the writings of three of my favourite authors:—*The New Pearl of Great Price*, *The New Light of Alchemy*, and those of "Eugenius Philalethes."

The alchemists knew that gold was the visible thing that was incorruptible. They had therefore to discover what there was in man that was analogous to gold, and this they affirmed, was the immortal part of him, which they decided was not his soul, for that, though capable of survival, was

subject to change. They also concluded that it was certainly not in the physical life of man; but that in the *Eleuthera* or purest Ether alone could immortality be found, and that *Eleuthera* subsisted in man.

We do not know the various stages of thought through which the knowledge of this discovery passed. My own idea is it never did pass through the crucible of a man's ordinary brain at all. I firmly believe it came originally, as does all supra-knowledge, by inspiration through man in *trance*, and is the utterance of his inner, perfected sensorium. This, when the Trance is a true one, is the only direct source of Divine inspiration.

The alchemists concluded that this incorruptible matter must be the One Thing, and they finally described it as a Stone, probably merely to abbreviate the description of the qualities which they could at once assign thereto; but it was named *the Philosopher's Stone*, as it could be no stone to any but a philosopher's mind. To the ordinary mind, it could be described in a thousand ways as it was *no known thing* at all.

The language concerning this matter has been described as "jargon." Jargon it was not, but a cryptographic method of description, because no one term describing the First Matter was convenient to use; but doubtless there was much tiresome play of words sometimes, or what seems so, incidental to many causes.

That chemistry, a science which seems to have existed for ages in the East, furnished the terms in which the alchemical introspection into nature was conducted, we all know. It seems highly probable to me that the philosophic student of those days had little else but chemical and medical knowledge on which to set up as a learned man, and he would naturally use terms which were familiar to the science of the day. Probably all the alchemists being born "searchers into nature" had more than the usual amount of chemical knowledge.

Now there was from ancient days a philosophic theory that the centre of each man is asleep, that is enchanted and awaits divine or magnetic fire to awaken him. The story of the *Sleeping Beauty* and many others of the beautiful old stories of classic and mediæval days are founded on this theory. The Art of Alchemy was neither more nor less than that of awakening the "Enchanted Centre" by its redemption from its prison since the Fall. The fairy tales concerning magicians and beautiful princes are only stolen or betrayed records of wondrous events taking place, not in enchanted or moated castles, Saracenic, Moorish, Gaulish or British, but in quiet silent rooms, probably the library or laboratory of the alchemist, according as his studies or temperament led him to literature or chemistry.

The Royal Art was, then, that of extracting from a

human centre that immortal essence, and the method of doing so, was the spagyric or magnetic one, by *the action of mesmeric traction*.

You will at once say, This is mere speculation, you can give us no proof, neither do you yourself, perhaps, know of it otherwise than as a theory. I reply, Yes and no. Certainly the alchemists all agree in telling us that it is necessary for a philosopher to make good his theory before he proceeds to the *praxis*. Well, I submit, I can give you no proof, but if you could enter into the theory, I think you would find it could be proven. At all events, though I only speak now as if it were but theory, yet you will see as I proceed, that there are facts which you may not yet suspect, redeeming my theory from its present transcendental position, which position may not, until you have thoroughly digested the theory, appear adequate.

The art of mesmerism, which we now despise or ignore, except as a by-play of science, or misuse alas, was once the sublime secret of the master-men of each century, which they were enjoined to keep inviolate, because it was found that qualities and conditions between souls *were interchangeable*, and many mysterious and extraordinary results took place, that made it a necessity that a Magus or a Sage should be what was termed a Holy man, *i.e.*, one who held the secret of the Philosopher's Stone in all its conditions, and also that none but a man of proved spiritual state should be Priest or occupy the functions of the Master of Ceremonies: those of a lesser degree of purity of thought and aim being assistants only. This was the original condition, and the priests in olden days were no doubt men of the highest type. But there were lapses, and here and there the magical secret would leak out and be used for other than the true end. Finally, the knowledge of only a small portion of the true method remained, and that almost died away, but not altogether, for such a wonderful secret for humanity could not be utterly lost, and it was preserved as of the utmost importance in "The Mysteries," and afterwards in the Secret Orders.

It was always the same teaching—that that counsel which emanated from the holy trance utterance should alone be considered divine. I feel convinced that this key of knowledge was the one used by the alchemists. They were, so to speak, free-lances, but, being men of ardour and vigour, they by degrees formed a sort of non-cohesive order of solitary searchers. These men, with others who really might have belonged to existing secret orders, constituted a sort of understood hidden society not requiring any ordained hierarchy, and a cryptographic correspondence would necessarily ensue. 40

As time went on, and as what may be called the magical power of the orthodox priesthood died out, the sporadic growth of alchemists still continued, and such men certainly

were viewed with anger by the orthodox priesthood and those who considered mesmerism as truly the gift of God; but the alchemical secret is just what makes the Royal Art quite different from that mesmerism which is generally known.

It is clear that Mesmer was not the first to discover the art called by his name, but in his case betrayed the secret. However, the amount of mesmerism he knew and divulged was, perhaps, no more than that which had survived and was practised by the hierarchs, who, under all their different names, headed the Secret Orders in later times. This special secret method is one which though I do surmise, I must do as I was told, *keep inviolately* until someone else discovers it. It may be plainly inferred in its entirety from what is said in *A Suggestive Enquiry into the Hermetic Mystery and Alchemy*, a new edition of which is forthcoming. I do not want to state what I have just said with the pretension of making myself the custodian of any great secret; but because it is a certain something in the method of applying the art of mesmerism which can only be declared, so to speak, in the alchemical work itself.

I need not tell you that mesmerism is the key to magic, known to every race and time. It has been reserved for this period since Mesmer utterly to misunderstand, misapply and underestimate this extraordinary faculty, which, with respect to derivation, at least, may be called the gift of God. But modern hypnotism and its correlatives are truly as devilish and harmful to agent and patient as pure mesmerism is heavenly and beneficial. Now the aim of the alchemists was to discover and bring to light the immortal part of man, because if once this marvellous matter could be seen or handled, it would *pari-passu* be no longer dormant, but most truly living. They also knew that there could be no vessel that could hold life. Life is not constituted as a grain or as an atom that could be extracted or drawn forth, exhibited to show its power in giving life.* They knew all this, yet they proceeded to the work; and I certainly think that there have been cases when "life" of this kind has been surely brought to the light of day, for the true alchemists were no liars.

Now, one of the many maxims of the alchemists is that which exhorts the seeker to dissolve the fixed, and fix the solved. What did they consider as fixed? According to the eye-sight of man, his physical body is "fixed." To the modern scientific eye, certainly not, but the alchemist held a theory which differed from the common idea, that the body tightly encases the soul, and the soul tightly encases the spirit. The first work, then, was to unfix the body. This was the "first gate." According to the old view of man he

* Its nearest demonstrated analogy is no doubt to be found in the phenomena of radioactivity.

contains as *minutem mundem*, in his three principles, as their vehicles, all the constituents of the kingdom of nature. Man, having been thus completed, combining all elements in his humanity, was Hermetically "sealed" by the fiat of the Almighty. The next step was for man to become Super-man by permission of the Almighty, through His appointed messengers, who had the requisite knowledge to unseal the Hermetic signature. Man is always seeking for entrance into the higher order, for the Kingdom of Heaven can be taken unlawfully, or lawfully. The "Royal Work" of unsealing is true Alchemy; whilst true religion is another method suitable to the mass of men. The end of both is the same. Ignorant mesmerism is violence without the Kingdom of Heaven or treasure being found.

* Action?

The first work, then, is to undo the Hermetic Signature and separate the "principles." You will find allusion after allusion to this process in the writings of the alchemists, but by mistranslating the words you may understand them differently and find nothing. The magnetic fluid and the linear action have the extraordinary effect of de-polarization, and every one knows how a human being when mesmerized can appear *pro tem* to be dead. However, I do not intend to deal with this process in detail. Suffice it to say, that all the descriptions of "Diana's doves," "flying eagles," "gates of brass," various colours and so forth, refer symbolically to the apparitions beheld in the astral realm by the emancipated soul. May I also say that the alchemist should be no common mesmerist, but have a clairvoyant and hierophantic vision within agent and patient? Those of you who have investigated such matters must have known or heard of those extraordinary events which are said to happen in the spiritistic séance-room where there is no hierarch (that is, a clairvoyant alchemist) present, and may have given a general acceptance to the term "externalized soul," as applied to mysterious appearances similar to those known as John King, Katie Cook, Samuel Wheeler, and such like, though no one has conclusively settled what these appearances really are, or of what quality of matter they are composed. I suggest, in these and similar cases, that they are not as spiritists contend, distinct personalities, and, certainly, they are not the ecstatic and whole soul of the sleeper; but might they not be disordered compositions of free ether, adulterated with astral matter, exuding from the bound Ether composing the body, through a certain unhallowed lesion of the nervous system; the result of the mesmeric traction of a strong discarnate spirit; or, of a natural lesion of the medium, operative at special times? It is, I think, in consequence of this chronic condition that this ever-gaping aperture permits the ingress and egress of free Ether in an unlawful and disorderly way, causing that too easy *rappor*t between the universal and the physical, productive of what is known as mediumship.

I use the words "unlawful and disorderly" because, according to the Hermetic Teaching, there should be no such aperture.

The allusion to Christ knocking at the door has mystic reference to what should be really *not* an aperture, but a closed door to all but The Honoured Visitor. The "Closed Palace of the King" is not a mere poetical title. Plato speaks of "the odylic wound," and he refers darkly to the possibility of its being healed. There is a passage in Sendivogius which is very pertinent to this, but as I have said so much on this subject in my book, *On a Gold Basis*, I shall not make any quotation here. You will perceive, however, that for any agent to inflict the wound, and force the unlawful egress of the partial, unprepared, startled soul into the atmospheric condition, is the crime which may be perhaps *the one* that is not forgivable in this world, or the next, because the consequences are beyond that agent's power of healing. Who can pardon the robber? "Break not the Superficies," says the old classical, Hermetic maxim, "or the Sin of the Patient may be referred or multiplied in the Agent." Was it not the hand of an inquisitorial, rather than that of an instructed Master which tormented the unhappy soul of the poor French girl, who had to bear the internal laceration, and in reply to her vivisector said she was Leonie I. Leonie II. etc.? She would have replied in any way that her dissected soul perceived to be according to the questioner's desire. There could be no truth or revelation, neither unhappily, any due restoration to its lawful place for that hapless creature's "Piece of Silver," ten of which she had owned, one of which was dragged out of her. It was the duty of a true master, not further to have dissolved her soul, but to have fixed the solution. When, so to speak, the operation was over, did the unqualified hierophant know where and how to replace and to fix the disintegrated atom of "First Matter"? That deeply important action, in which one human being "entrusts his soul to another," is lightly dismissed from the curriculum of present day study as one of no material value, whereas it is the opening of the first gate by the magical lance with the knowledge of "pyrotechnic artifice." I might read you pages proving this from *The Suggestive Enquiry* and elsewhere, where those romantic sounding words sometimes seem to lead you up to some conceivable chemical experiment, and then lo! the usual baffling jargon commences. But with the key, the apparent jargon can be turned into readable sense. However, let us now having the first key, Mesmerism, proceed to unlock further mysteries. It is conceded that there has appeared at spiritistic séances extraordinary apparitions, seemingly of human beings—a sort of strange simulacra, however, in most cases, though one *has* heard of beauteous appearances. Often there is a sort of a cloud-like vapour exuding from the

side of the entranced sufferer, for the medium must be and is truly a sufferer and victim, for the operator is as unprepared as his patient. Listen to these words of "Eugenius Philaethes,"—

"It was scarce day, when all alone
I saw Hyanthe and her throne.
In fresh, green damascos she was drest,
And o'er a sapphire globe did rest, . . .
And underneath her hand was spread
The white supporter of her head.
But at my second studied view,
I could perceive a silent dew
Steal down her cheeks; lest it should stayne
Those cheeks where only smiles should reign.
The tears streamed down for haste, and all
In chaines of liquid pearle did fall . . .
So dy'd Hyanthe. Here (said shee)
Let not this vial part from thee.
It holds my heart, though now 'tis spilled
And into waters all distill'd."

[*Cælum Terræ*. See Mr. Waite's edition of *The Magical Writings of Thomas Vaughan*, 1888, pp. 131 and 132.]

"For," says *The Suggestive Enquiry* (p. 349) "not all was vaporous vision as we have shown, or mere idealilty on the internal ground; but experience there was present, with power and effect in substance to bear its witness. This marvellous subsistence of the Vital Principles in their extreme separation by Art, requires care and attention to apply the three-fold secret of the Art, so that the hypostatic principles of attraction, repulsion and circulation, may be brought into perfect equilibriate accord, the one no more acting, than the other is resisting in the Ethereal Bond." "Seek three in one, and again one in three, dissolve, congeal, and remember," says Khunrath, "most carefully to observe the three-fold law of the composition. I write not fables, with thy hand thou shalt touch and with thy eyes, thou shalt see Azoth, the Universal, which alone with the internal and external fire in harmonious sympathy with the Olympic Fire is sufficient for thee, by inevitable necessity physico-chemically united, for the consummation of the Philosopher's Stone," [quoted in *The Suggestive Enquiry*, p. 352, from Khunrath's *Amphetheatrum Sapientiæ Æternæ*, etc., Ch. viii.]

I must now direct your attention to a remarkable classical curiosity, namely the "Tear Bottle." No one quite knows what these bottles were, neither is the origin known of the strange title to an Italian wine called *Lachrymæ Christi*. This name has but correspondential value, but the tear-bottles have reference to some strange ceremonies long ago lost and forgotten. Nevertheless, if any one will reflect what

sort of tears are shed, when the soul is in deep grief and contrition, it will be concluded, I think, that they are a physical effect caused by the attrition and solution of that soul, altogether different from the usual eye secretion. For tears of pure sorrow are derivable from feeling and emotion only, not from any outside effect or any matter put into the body, neither have they any further purpose to serve, but that of evaporation and return to the Cosmic Ether. Now, the alchemists carefully noted the correspondence between physical and psychical, and used terms that apply and explain the one by the other, but with this qualification, that the words used in descriptions of the various processes are often displaced, purposely no doubt, and though each process is described correctly, the words used may be applied to other stages. Each alchemist used his own class of terms to imply his own results, and the reason he did so, was to prevent unworthy and unfit men meddling with another person's soul-life. A certain possibility and condition of *will* and *knowledge*, I will not say whether of agent or patient, coming to the knowledge of a man of selfish and ambitious nature was at all costs to be avoided, for it was known that men and women only of the highest possible strength of character, unswerving probity and honesty of purpose, can stand the great temptation.

In the *Cælum Terræ* of "Eugenius Philalethes" you will find this caution, as also in many other places, very strongly put. [See Mr. Waite's edition of *The Magical Writings of Thomas Vaughan*, 1888, p. 138].

Religion, classical philosophy, the kabala and astrology are, indeed, inextricably mixed up with Alchemy.

My theory and that of *The Suggestive Enquiry*, on which it is based, may, to many, be altogether disappointing and seem to form a quagmire, rather than a firm ground for enquiry and research. You may, indeed, think all that I have so far said as very remote from what is considered to be the aim of Alchemy, namely the transmutation of metals and the art of making Gold. Well—let us see, and I do not forget that the alchemists claimed also to have discovered the Elixir of Life and Universal Medicine. Professor Pattison Muir, in his little work already referred to, says: "the language of the alchemists was rich in such expressions as these . . . 'our arcanum is gold exalted to the highest degree of perfection to which the combined action of nature and art can develop it.'" He then proceeds to say, "such commingling of ethical and physical ideas, such application of moral conceptions to material phenomena was characteristic of the alchemical method of regarding Nature. The necessary results were; great confusion of thought, much mystification of ideas, and a superabundance of views about natural events." [*l.c.*, p. 30.] So far Prof. Pattison Muir. His conclusion would be perfectly just, if there were no

Ariadne's clue to lead one out of the labyrinth. But the mistake is too often made of assuming that the alchemists were all men of confused thought and mystified views, men, moreover so supremely silly as to add to their nonsense by using words known in the general world to have specific meanings. Truly they would have been considerable fools indeed, if century after century, they had, at hap-hazard and in real ignorance of the nature they professed to examine, used term after term, writing the same to each other, and studying with extraordinary zeal and respect, everything that those whom they considered masters wrote or had ever written. To me it is surprising that modern commentators are not more careful in their criticisms of the alchemists, and that they do not feel intuitively that they are dealing with men who were not concerned with chemistry as we understand it, but were Philosophers who were dealing with *Arch-Chemistry* and vitality itself, who had for their aim the loftiest problem that can engage the soul and brain of man. The alchemists openly disclaimed common chemistry; but in order to hide their *Arch-Chemistry* they used ordinary terms to which they attached other meanings. Their language, however, was no disorderly "Volapuk" but had an ancient pedigree. This is true of "sulphur," "mercury," "Green Iron," "Our Water," "Magical Earth," "Our Chalybs," "The Crow which is the blackness of the night and the clearness of the day," "Fiery Dragon," "Salt," "Sulphur" and "Mineral Radix," and a host of other terms.

You will ask me whether I believe in the possibility of the Elixir of Life and the Universal Medicine. Well, I do in their possibility and with reference to the *arcanum* of the Art, but not in the probability of their being soon found. The search implies too much unselfishness and devotion to be carried on now. But eventually, I do not doubt that some wonderful new discovery apparently will be made, which will put mankind on a safer basis, so that the Art of Alchemy or the spiritual resuscitation of man can be safely worked for his superb benefit. You will ask me, too, whether I think gold can be made by any of these apparently spiritual recipes. Yes I do, but much by the means that rubies and emeralds are made artificially now, namely, by tremendous pressure, which in the case of gold will be obtained by the transference of the spiritual force to another field of action. The alchemists always regarded light as a force, what they referred to as *the Light of Life* was an inconceivably great force or pressure. They worked *with* and *by* life, which they describe in various ways, as fire, heat, etc. You feel, no doubt, that this is still all on an abstract ground with no reference to alembics or furnaces or any of the paraphernalia of a chemical laboratory. Neither is one required, for as I have said Alchemy is *Arch-Chemistry* only. No doubt among enquiring and not very loyal "assistants," many things leaked

out, which their acute and sharp minds perceived and applied to physical conditions, with pathological directness. In consequence, I believe, as modern and physical chemistry grew and prospered, the arch-chemistry gradually withdrew, leaving men, such as Van Helmont, Glauber, Stahl, Boyle, etc., as only partial initiates and, as such, probably never knowing the *secretum secretorum* of mesmeric work, to settle down in degrees to the study of chemistry in the ordinary way.

It will also seem, perhaps, an eminently unsatisfactory trend in my philosophy to give such important position to that obscure and what many people consider undesirable phenomenon, namely that of trance. But I think if more study were directed to this subject it would be found that it is one of unprecedented interest and value. I am not stating my own words in saying that Revelation to be of universal importance such as are all Sacred Writings, must be given in deepest trance only.

Kant, I believe, decided that no knowledge that does not refer to phenomena can be known except by revelation, through inspiration. All such matters were deeply studied by the ancients, who, to my view, were occupied on profounder problems than moderns have imagined. Prof. Bergson demolishes in a splendid manner the mechanical notion involved in Spencer's philosophy. He describes, in his *Evolution Créatrice*, the radical error underlying Spencer's concept of evolution. Spencer integrates the evolved with the evolved, failing to see that he is thus taking useless trouble, and that in positing the slightest fragment of the actually evolved he posits the whole, so that it is in vain for him to pretend to explain the genesis of it.

To get at and understand the genesis of matter was just what the alchemists assayed. But they never confused "existence," which they claimed as an "aggregate," with the "whole." It was this "whole" they aimed at. And they knew it could not be found on the outside of man, but they must seek the "Cosmic Ether" in living man, not dead man, nor yet as vivisectionists, but, to coin a word, as "psychosectionists."

Prof. Pattison Muir [l.c., p. 32] says of the alchemists, that their "essence [or Ether] was supposed to have a material form, an ethereal or middle nature and an immaterial or spiritual life." His interpretation of their theory is not mine, but he is certainly right in speaking of the three principles, which are to be found in the "First Matter," i.e., throughout the substance of all nature; or there would be no life at all.

The alchemists conceived of life differently from the manner of modern philosophy. Life, they regarded as varying in quality and only symbolically commensurate with the plane of life enquired into.

Mundane and phenomenal life, they considered, was

vitalised by "Ether" of inferior quality, force and power, containing and expressing the elements fire, light, heat, air, etc., so they had to turn the key on the lock opening the door to the middle region, the first gate of which is the astral or cosmic circuit, which by them was considered as no real advance on this world, in any true sense, as it contained all the failures, derelicts, stray, unfinished forms, mental and bodily *debris*, and flimsy, foolish thoughts. It is the day-dreaming region, where all the castles in Spain rear their shining but unstable towers, where all the foolish fancies are born from rambling imagination without aim, beyond the self-satisfaction of the dreamer,—the mirror on which the events in this world are photographed, and the phonograph where sound is stored,—for in this realm everything is refracted, confused, reversed and disturbed, the big is the little, the little the big. It is the realm of the "Sphinx of Antiquity," where the traveller has to pause and stand to answer the famous riddle in order that he should be thoroughly equipped with theoretical knowledge of the new country and with character to sustain active trials instead of passive ones. This was the "phantasmal" region of Plato, which was the first trial to be encountered in the Mysteries, which formed part of the educational curriculum of every man of birth and position. No one could have palmed off astral wonders on such a man. Just as revelation reveals itself, so does falsehood. Let me hasten to say, that there is hence involved all the difference of what Swedenborg calls a "discrete degree," for there is no easy link between the trance of an ordinary sleep-walker, or a subject the functions of whose brain are inhibited from conscious action by a hypnotist, and that of the whole or complete trance of the Spirit in which other consciousness is not inhibited, but stilled and at rest, as in that sublime moment, when "God moved on the Face of the Water and said, Let there be light, and there was light." Then does intuitive intelligence, illuminated intellect, the very Truth itself, make itself apparent, *i.e.*, visible as the Substance out of which the Worlds are built. But we must pause, and if you will take it all in a symbolical sense, I will merely say that gold is the phenomenal analogue to truth. With regard to the mysteries: In modern times we use the skeleton ceremony of Consecration into Holy Orders, which consists, so to speak, of the non-vital remains of what was once an efficacious rite. The term "Efficient Hand" is no idle term. It meant a human hand, holding the vitality of the Logistic Ray, the Golden Bough, conveying life to the moribund. I am not here speaking of physical but of psychical decline and death. The "Efficient Hand," holding the power of God Himself, is the Hand which strengthens and sustains the life of every man. And this is not all symbology. There is an ultimatum to all intuition for the course of the special forces, to the

destined end: the ultimatum and demonstration in Alchemy on the physical plane was in the Mineral Kingdom. By this I mean that the transmutation that reached the physical plane referred to metals only. The alchemists claimed that inferior metals could be raised to the superior or noble state, but never did they claim that the stuff of the Cosmic Ether could be transmuted into the next higher kingdom, that of the vegetable. Not a daisy can be made or created. The alchemists maintained that it was necessary to find the seed of each Kingdom, and they declared they had discovered that seed of metals, which would produce gold. This seed was "the powder of projection," but here I cannot give details.

There is one point yet to mention and that is, that the "occult chemistry" of Mr. Leadbeater and Mrs. Besant has, I think, no resemblance at all to the Arch-Chemistry of the alchemists.

I have given what I consider three strong clues, and a very important key to the labyrinth of Alchemy, and lest you think my key is a poor and disappointing one, let me beg of you with that key to try to unlock therewith the old-myths, classical and mediæval, and to find out the meanings of the Kabala and of those great poems, the Iliad, the Odyssey, the wonderful verse of Virgil, of Dante, and the cryptic stories relating to the Arthurian Cycle, the Holy Graal, and much else of a like nature, as well as the hidden meaning of the Old and New Testaments. They all tend to one discovery and declare the same, and even in their inconsistencies will be instructive to him who has the key. And he who sets himself in this wise to the comprehension of the whole philosophy will be a competent judge of our labours, of how much assistance we have given to the recovery of lost wisdom, and with what sincerity we have opened the way permeating into those ancient abodes of light.

ABSTRACT OF DISCUSSION.

THE REV. J. J. POOL, F.R.G.S., said that he had listened to a most delightful paper, for which he considered that the Society was greatly indebted to Mme. de Steiger. It was full of suggestive thoughts, and, without assenting to everything expressed therein, he found that his reason went along with it as a whole. One expression, however, he was inclined to query, namely, "the Fall of Man," because he did not think that nowadays one could believe in the doctrine of the Fall.

Mr. D. N. DUNLOP (Editor of *The Path*) said that he had listened with great pleasure to what he considered to be the best paper of its kind he had heard during the last twenty-five years. He considered that it had made plain an opportunity for the Society to undertake a great work for human-

ity, namely the practical work of Alchemy, mystically understood. That was what was needed and should be attempted.

Mr. A. E. WAITE said that he had listened to the suggestions of the last speaker with an interest only second to that with which he had listened to Mme. de Steiger's paper. The life requisite to the great alchemical experiment was the life of saintship, and could not be attempted by a Society other than a secret one. The ancient alchemists, he thought, were concerned with the same work as the mystics within the Church living the life of contemplation; but they had carried the experiment a stage further, and embodied the results of their experiences in symbolic texts. It was, he considered, the chief aim of the Society firstly to decode these texts, and thus gain the secret knowledge, which could then be practically applied.

THE CHAIRMAN said that there was no necessity for him to point out that the meeting had listened to a very interesting and suggestive paper. It might, in certain respects, seem a departure from previous papers, which had been mainly historical or interpretative on the scientific side, but the founders of the Society had always intended that every side of the subject should receive attention, the mystical no less than the other. He agreed with Mr. Waite that the chief work of the Society must consist in decoding the alchemical texts. It was the business of the Society to get at the root of the matter and produce a complete explanation of the origin and significance of Alchemy. Mr. Dunlop's suggestions were also of much interest, but such practical work was the business of individuals, rather than of a Society as a whole; though were it possible to reveal it, the Society would be profited by an account of any such experiment. He was inclined to think, however, that there was something intrinsically secret in Alchemy, mystically understood, something which was secret, not because it must not, but because it could not, be told to any but an initiate. Mme. de Steiger had spoken of this secret under many symbols—not all of which he understood,—but to him the most beautiful and significant was that of the wonderful fairy-story of Sleeping Beauty and the Prince.

Mme. DE STEIGER thanked the speakers for their gratifying expressions of approval of her paper. She hoped the suggestions she had made therein would be followed up by other members. In reply to the Rev. J. J. Pool, she said that the doctrine of the Fall of Man was the ground of the whole Hérmetic theory, without which it would collapse. It was not possible, however, in the time at her disposal to attempt a justification of that doctrine, which must be accepted as a preliminary to the work of Alchemy.

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THE AKASHIC RECORDS



IN the pursuance of the study of occult science in general, the student is at the very outset, brot face to face with reference to what are commonly called the AKASHIC RECORDS and with citations from them as from the final source of authority and appeal.

That such records do exist is the concensus of opinion and assent of all legitimate occult schools, but in attempting to find an equally unanimous consent as to just what they really are, their nature, place in the cosmic scheme of things and their comparative availability, we are confronted by the lamentable fact that in this as in so many other departments of occult science, there is as yet, no definite canon or law.

Vaguely, we are informed that "the facts concerning the primeval past have not passed beyond the reach of occult research"; that in spite of the obvious fact that all material things ultimately disintegrate, the spiritual forces that cause the definition of one form from another and varied forms as well, leave ineradicable copies of their works in the spiritual foundations of the worlds.

We are furthermore instructed that any one who can raise the vibratory status of his faculties of sense perception from the ordinary visible states of being into the invisible spheres may have access to this vast panorama in which are recorded all past events, not only of this world but of cosmos as well.

This lack of a definite canon however, has proved to be the open door to a vast deal of charlatanry, for almost anything under the sun can be claimed on the authority of the Akashic Records, and probably will continue to be claimed, until a sufficient number of well developed initiates have establisht some acceptable concordat, which will effectually bar the utterance and promulgation of the impossible, illogical and oft times absurd speculations taught under the assumed authority of the Akashic Records.

In the first place, while open to the scrutiny and study of all who duly qualify by personal development to contact them, nevertheless com-

paratively few in our present materialistic day actually succeed in so contacting them, and further, of those few who do, actually succeed in contacting them, still fewer are able to read them, and still further, of those who can read them to some extent, extremely few are able to read them at length, accurately and beyond peradventure of doubt so that their readings may be accepted as actual criteria. To read the Akashic Records at length and at will requires something more than simply a proper spiritual development, it calls into play the requirement of actual physical and mental strength, for the farther back the reader attempts to go, the greater is the demand upon his mental and spiritual strength, and without a reserve force of stout physical health to fall back upon as potential, he cannot hope to go to any great length of reading. Hence the Rosicrucian insistence upon a sound physical body as well as sound spiritual qualifications. And in spite of popular notions to the contrary, prompted oft times by the so-called and assumed attainments of what are known as Yogis, it may be safely asserted that the weak, emaciated, almost inhuman ascetic has given little to the world of value from the Akashic Records.

The extent to which one can read the Akashic Records after becoming sufficiently developed to contact them, depends entirely upon the extent to which the initiate has become able to distinguish accurately the differentiated phenomena of the various ethers. These ethers are four in number and constitute in their totality the Aether known to science. Science however, has not yet arrived at the same status in regard to them as has occult science, which separates Aether into the Chemical, Life, Light and Reflecting classifications.

We shall arrive at a better understanding of the Akashic Records if we begin with an analysis of the name itself. "Akashic" is from *Akasa*, the Life Principle, the Astral or Sidereal Light; the all-pervading force, usually considered as fluid in its nature in somewhat the same manner as electricity is spoken of as fluid or flowing,—pervading and interpenetrating all matter, nervous, organic and inorganic in a way similar to the activity of the luminiferous ether of academic science. This force has also been termed in its penetrative property the PSYCHODE and when called into play by mental activity, the ECTENIC FORCE.

By whatever name it may be known, it is still the identical force known to occultists as *Akasa*. To show forth the universality of this force and the fact that it has been known to the initiates of all races and ages, we may say with Blavatsky, that it is the Chaos of the Ancients, the Zoroastrian Sacred Fire, the Antusbryum of the Parsees, the Hermes-Fire; the Elmes-Fire of the Germans; the Lightning of Cybele; the Burning Torch of Apollo; The Flame on the Altar of Pan; the Inextinguishable Fire in the Temple on the Greek Acropolis; also in that of Vesta; the Fire-flame of Pluto's Helm; the Brilliant Sparks on the Hats of the Dioscuri; on the Gorgon's Head; the Helm of Pallas, the Staff of Mercury; the Egyptian Ra; the Grecian Zeus; the Pentecostal Fire-tongues; the Burning Bush of Moses; the Pillar of Fire of Exodus; the Burning Lamp of Abraham; the Eternal Fire of the Bottomless Pit; The Delphic Oracular Vapors; the Sidereal Light of the Rosicrucians;

the Akasa of the Hindus; the Astral Light of Eliphas Levi; the Nerve-aura and Fluid of the Magnetists; the Od Force of Reichenbach; the Fire-Globe or Meteor-cat of Babinet; the Psychod and Ectenic Force of Thury; the Psychic Force of Crookes; the Atmospheric magnetism of Naturalists; Galvanism and Electricity, are but various names for one and the same thing,—the Greek ARCHAEUS of the Rosicrucians.

Now Akasa is a Sanscrit word meaning literally, "sky." But in the esoteric interpretation it also designates the imponderable and intangible life-principle—the Astral and Celestial Lights combined together, the two forming the ANIMA MUNDI and constituting the soul and spirit of Man; the Celestial Light forming his *nous*, *pneuma*, or Divine Spirit, and the other his soul. The grosser particles of the astral spirit are said to enter into the composition of the physical body. Akasa is also the term which represents the mysterious fluid termed by modern science Aether, the "all-pervading aether." As, in Syria, Palestine and India meant the sky, life, and the sun, at the same time. The softer pronunciation of the word was AH. AH is Iah, Iao and AO. God told Moses that His name was "I AM," (Ahiah) a reduplication of the words AH or IAH. The words AS, AH, or IAH mean life, existence, and are evidently the root of the word Akasa which in Hindustani is pronounst Ahasa, the Life-principle, Divine Live Giving Fluid or Medium. It is also the Hebrew Ruah meaning the Wind, breath, air in motion, or moving Spirit.

Finally, Akasa, is the WILL of Divinity and all things, in operation and is the great principle of Life of which the inexplicable power of Attraction is but an atomic portion.

It will be noted from the foregoing that Akasa presents two distinct aspects, the material, substantial, and the immaterial, intangible, or Astral. This is further borne out by the effective definitions given by Hartmann. We have already identified Akasa with Archaeus. Archaeus, says Hartmann, is "the great invisible storehouse of Nature wherein the characters of all things are preserved and contained. To one aspect it represents the ASTRAL LIGHT; in another, PRIMORDIAL MATTER.

ASTRAL LIGHT, says the same initiate, is "the LIGHT OF NATURE. The MEMORY, or universal storehouse of Nature, in which the characters of all things that ever existed are preserved. He who can see the images existing in the Astral Light, can read the history of all past events, and prophesy the future."

These last definitions furnish the best possible key to the true Nature and locale of the Akashic Records. The Astral Light represents the immaterial, intangible, astral or spiritual status; the Primordial Matter represents the material, apparently substantial expression of the same. Now Light is a form of ENERGY. And Matter, in the latest concept of academic science is also regarded as a form of ENERGY. But Matter we have also learned from the earlier studies in Rosicrucian Philosophy, is mainly consistent as the holes or bubbles in a vaster ocean of substance infinitely more dense than anything that the human mind can conceive. This substance or material of such tremendous density is called the Aether.

In this Aether then, are in very truth concealed the secrets of cosmos, for it is in the dense tho fluid substance in which all worlds and systems have their existence, and in which therefore, they are maintained and preserved. It is hard for those who have not had specific scientific training to grasp this concept of the tremendous density of Aether, yet true it is, that so much denser is it in comparison with what we ordinarily term as Matter, that everything that has objective existence as such in terms of Matter, is simply a bubble or vacuole space in the Aetheric Ocean about us. Therefore, as bubbles in the water make for themselves definite space and room therein and, figuratively make the impress of their size, shape, etc., on the impermanent water, so has everything that has had existence or does now exist, made its definite impress upon the surrounding Aetheric Walls, these last being of imperishable, immutable character.

Just as does the light, airy, yet material bubble move freely and rapidly to and fro in its watery environment, so does each form of organic Matter in the Aetheric environment, even tho the latter be so vastly greater in density. It is simply the Law of Relativity practically applied. And the impressions made by mental process, either in the incarnate or discarnate state do not differ materially in the record they impress, for in the Aetheric World, as Thoughts become concreted from their original abstractions, they possess even greater power of making a clear, unmistakable impress, than do the objective conditions of the visible world, which lose their clarity and preciseness of expression in Physical manifestation.

In spite of the rapid advances of modern science in the realm of the atom, electron, corpuscle and ion, Aether still remains the elusive, imponderable form of Substance that defies all laboratory processes. It cannot be defined,—logically because we cannot confine that in which we ourselves are confined. It may not be contained, isolated or subjected to any known reactions. Academic science simply cognizes its existence as an explanation for certain other phenomena which would seem to make the presence of such a fluid, all-pervading medium necessary. Once cognized, hypotheses multiply rapidly and a wider field of vision opens to view. But Aether is not of the physical laboratory, but of the mental and spiritual scientific reactions, demonstrations and recognitions.

It is our own ISOLATED POSITION IN THIS DENSE, IMPONDERABLE MASS THAT LIMITS OUR SENSE PERCEPTION TO RELATIVELY FEW OCTAVES IN THE SCALE OF VIBRATION BY WHICH WE BECOME CONSCIOUS OF OUR ENVIRONMENT AND EXISTENCE.

WHEN ONE SUCCEEDS BY PROPER DEVELOPMENT, IN RAISING HIS VIBRATORY STATUS SUFFICIENTLY TO ENABLE HIM TO ATTAIN AMPLIFIED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS, THEN HE ADDS TO HIS SENSE EXPERIENCE A DEGREE OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS PERTAINING AND RELATIVE TO THAT STATE OR CONTAINER IN WHICH HE HIMSELF IS CONTAINED.

This, you will find, is a new point of view for the occult student. Instead of teaching all sorts of impractical yogism, positively not adapted for the occidental mind or physique, the Rosicrucians teach the development of each of man's vehicles to a status of strength and virility that will enable one to attain a higher vibrational status and amplify or

expand his own individual consciousness to an attunement with that of a higher or inner plane or region than the mundane.

Aether is the universal substance-ocean all about, penetrating and pervading all worlds. It is obvious then, that everything in the realm of Matter, and, as we know that Thoughts are *things*,—realities—therefore having existence—everything that has inner or outer, exoteric or esoteric manifestation, gains existence only by making for itself a definite place and relative position in the Aetheric Ocean or Cosmic Medium, and it is equally obvious that this operation of making place makes also the definite impress of character of the principle seeking expression and manifestation therein.

The Akashic Records then, are about us everywhere, and all cosmos is the extent and scope of their status. The student needs not to dissociate himself from the physical body in order to contact them for he is in them, making every moment his own individual record upon them, adding whether for relative good or bad, his own accretions to the general sum of human experience.

While it is not necessary to "leave the body" to read or to study the Akashic Records, it IS necessary to develop one's powers of clairvoyance to the highest possible degree in order to read them intelligently and usefully. It is from these Records rather than from the personal aura that the trained, voluntary seer or psychic reads for the person for whom he may be thus functioning. Many involuntary psychics contact these Records in a hazy, unintelligible sort of manner, and while functioning in a perfectly genuine phase of psychism, they read erroneously and draw wrong conclusions from what they read and leave their consultant worse off than before.

The necessity for a high degree of well developed clairvoyance is caused by the further necessity of being able to distinguish between the various ethers already cited. The Record or impress of any principle seeking manifestation and expression is accomplished by means of the corresponding ether, by virtue of which, it functions. The operations of impress and record are carried on mainly by means of the Chemical, Life and Light Ethers. These are the three ethers that find their culmination in the three lower regions or sub-divisions of the World or Region of Concrete Thought,—the Aerial, Oceanic and Continental; corresponding to the Light, Life and Chemical ethers respectively. These three sub-divisions constitute on the Rosicrucian chart, Archaeus, but as the greater embraces and includes the lesser, so these regions of the Concrete Thought World reach down into and include both the Astral and Physical Worlds, generally speaking.

In this way, the soul qualities, Power, Light and Life, operating as Forces of Attraction; the Neutral quality of Feeling, and the Repulsive forces of Wishes, Impressionability and Passion all find expression and therefore impress and record on the Akashic Records.

But above all, it is by virtue of the powers and forces of the Reflecting Ether, that the trained clairvoyant reads clearly the Akashic Records, and when able so to read clearly, his next step is to study them until he understands the modus by which the records are made. This Archaeus or storehouse of Nature is what is referred to in the Rosicrucian Prayer which reads. "Nature is the Book in which Thy character is written and no one can read it unless he has been in Thy school." No

matter how clearly one might see the characters, one would be unable to read Greek unless he first learned the Greek Alphabet and the proper method of putting together the phonetic values. Then and then only would he begin with the aid of his lexicon, to translate the characters he could so clearly see and read. So too, with the Akashic Records. One may be sufficiently clairvoyant to see them, and to some extent read events recorded thereon but at the same time totally unable to tell whether they refer to past, present or future, and equally unable to correlate them with the proper individual, race or country and still more unable to give them proper time sequence. Time is the great stumbling block in all attempts at psychic reading.

It is this utilization of the power of the Reflecting Ether that makes the difference between the voluntary and the involuntary psychics. The former by development have established the requisite correspondences in the brain and with the various psychic centers of the vehicles, and are thus able to function in the inner or subliminal light by what is known as the interior illumination, thus cognizing conditions which do not ordinarily pertain to the mundane regions unless indeed they choose to study such conditions as well, for to the trained clairvoyant no department of Nature is a sealed book.

The involuntary, untrained, or ordinary "medium" sees only those conditions which pertain to the mundane environment and the lower astral regions. They are therefore unable to read the Akashic Records at all.

Another requisite must be kept in mind. Psychical Researchers are apt to regard rather lightly the insistence laid by genuine occultists upon the spiritual side of all study in this realm. Nevertheless, let it be understood once and for all, that the prayer of the Rosicrucians just referred to distinctly says, "Nature is the book in which Thy (GOD'S) character is written and *no one* can read it unless he has been in Thy school." Commendable as are all attempts to enlarge man's knowledge of the invisible worlds, occult science insists that in the instance of the Akashic Records as in so many other departments of the science, the student is coming face to face with God's own personal records of his visible and invisible works, and such records of the Divine are not to be read carelessly, lightly, nor from motives of curiosity, or merely to add to the general sum of human knowledge. Knowledge is not withheld from man when he has arrived at the right stage to receive it, but he is not allowed to pry into the unseen only so far as he entitles himself to a right to know by the proper manner of living and the right and reverent attitude in his search.

To the seeker who has attained a degree of psychic development but not the spiritual awakening or illumination to entitle him to understand, the Akashic Records will appear a source of illusion. To such an one, for instance, the records of achievement of a given past will appear as the actual substantial buildings, palaces and peoples themselves. Thus many well intentioned spiritualists often speak of seeing the models or duplicates of things long bygone when in reality they have seen only the visualization of the impress made by such conditions. The trained seer knows that a stone or marble building of the material world does not call for a stone or marble archetype. It calls for the concreted

thought impress from which that actual stone or marble structure was objectively crystallized.

Neither must it be understood for a moment that the Akashic Records are of a documentary nature written in such style that any one of any age can easily read them. They are not couched in any form of human language or expression. Many attempts have been made at a general human language similar to Esperanto but only failure has resulted so far. Such generalizations come only by evolutionary process, not only by incidental inventions. To read the Akashic Records of God, the reader must be essentially a man of God, striving to understand the nature and character of God. Then he will understand the universal symbolism in which they are recorded.

The fact that the Akashic Records have so often been described as "Astral Records," something placed in or pertaining to the Astral World, is incontrovertible evidence that those who have so taught, have not themselves been able to contact these wondrous records of cosmic process. The fallacy of ascribing astral location to them is at once obvious when the illusory nature of the Astral World is recognized and understood. In the Astral realm all is constant change. Here the discarnate spirit learns anew in each after death interim, the illusion of desire. Desire is necessary as motive power and stimulus but by its very nature it is impermanent, for even good desires are in a state of constant change, due to aspiration for something still higher.

So it is, that records which must of their very nature be absolutely permanent to be of any use to the ceaseless flow of human incarnation, cannot have their impress in the substance of the Astral World where nothing is permanent. Neither are these Akashic Records "visualized in the Astral World" as is so often stated. They are visualized, indeed, but whoso has become able to visualize them looks far beyond the Astral Region, into the Thought World itself, the Concrete Region which is one of permanency and stability, a Region of Archetypes.

The Akashic Records are visualized and read, by effort of WILL on the part of the psychic or trained clairvoyant. In the inner worlds, Time and Space are, hard as it may seem to comprehend it from the exoteric standpoint, rendered practically nil. The progreest spirit other than what are called the "Earth bounds," IS where it WILLS to be. The Spirit SEES what it WILLS to see. If it Wills to study the Akashic Records without special purpose definitely fixt in mind, a varegated panorama is presented to view somewhat in the nature of a dream condition, and just as intangible, for if you were conducted into a dark room for instance and a picture of some battle, expedition, or other notable occurrence were suddenly projected on to a hitherto invisible screen, it might be interesting to you while it lasted but would also be absolutely unintelligible to you unless you had by expressing your desire therefore, had a picture of what you actually desired to see, presented to you.

Man is given help from the invisible regions only when he has exhausted his own resources. He is made to do all that is possible, for himself, in order to develop his resourcefulness. When therefore, the psychic desires to recover an historical event Akashically, it is only after he has made all possible human research that he is entitled to read in the Akashic Records. If he desires to study his previous incarnations, it is only after he has learned all that is possible about his present existence, his evolutionary status, vehicles, natures and essentials, that he is entitled to know by what names and in what places the same Ego has been known in former times.

Another key to the manner by which the impress of all creative activity and processes becomes a very part of the Akashic Matter itself will be found by its identification with Chaos in our opening observations. Therein it was identified as the Chaos of the Ancients among many other synonyms. Plato and Pythagoras named it, "the Soul of the World," after it had been impregnated by the Spirit of that which broods over the Primaeval Waters or Chaos. It is by being REFLECTED IN IT," say the Kabalists, that the Brooding Principle CREATED the phantasmagoria of a visible, manifested universe. It was Chaos before, and Aether after this "reflection." This principle of reflection is well known to Rosicrucian students, as the means by which One became Two, the Visible manifested from the Invisible. So the Akasa must necessarily contain and preserve every detail important or relatively unimportant, of the reflection that we call visibly creation.

But the Akashic Records or rather the substance of them is really much more than a mere sequence of cosmic conditions. Academic science ordinarily cognizes Four Elements, Fire, Water, Earth and Air. Occult Science knows of Seven Elements, of which Akasa, Aether is the Fifth. It is the Fifth Cosmic Principle or Fundamental. It is the Matter of Mind Stuff, which will become more definitely organized and visibly distinguished from the Air during the end of our Fourth Round. Cosmically, Akasa is a "radiant, cool, diathermanous type of plastic Matter, creative in its physical Nature, correlative in its grossest aspects and portions, immutable in its higher principles. In the creative condition it is called the Sub-Root; and in conjunction with radiant heat, it recalls "dead worlds" to life. In its highest aspect it is the Soul of the World; in its lower, the Destroyer."

As we proceed to formulate our own individual concepts and definitions of Akasa, we must remember that it is highly differentiated. As the Astral Light or "Grand Agent Magique" of Eliphas Levi, it is not the container of all things but the REFLECTOR of all things. As Aether, its noumenon, it is the container of all things, yet Aether is its lowest manifestation. Waite, in translating Levi, gives the description of the latter in the following:—"This ambient and all-penetrating fluid, this Ray detachd from the Central or Spiritual Sun's splendor . . . fixt by the weight of the atmosphere and the power of central attraction. . . the Astral Light, this electro-magnetic ether, this vital and luminous caloric, is represented on the ancient monuments by the girdle of Isis, which twines around two poles. . . and in the ancient theogonies by the Serpent devouring its own tail, emblem of prudence and of Saturn (an

emblem of infinity, immortality and Cronus—Time, not the God Saturn nor the Planet. *Blavatsky*) It is the winged dragon of Medea, the double serpent of the caduceus, and the Tempter of Genesis, and it is also the brazen snake of Moses encircling the Tau. . . Lastly, it is the Devil of exoteric dogmatism, and is really the force that souls must conquer, in order to detach themselves from the chains of Earth; for if they should not, they will be absorbed by the same power which first produced them, and will return to the central and eternal fire."

The expression,—“fixt by the weight of the atmosphere” simply refers to the refractive power of the atmosphere as it relates to the passage of light, but the concluding statement, that it is a force “that souls must conquer, in order to detach themselves from the chains of Earth,” is quite true, especially in the esoteric sense. We conquer Akasa and the Akashic Records by our conscious Karma. That is, we conquer the weakness of our individual records by our intelligence of action physically, mentally and spiritually, after we have become cognizant of the Truth of Karma and the Law of Compensation. Our future activities intelligently directed in the light of Karmic knowledge can be made to so accumulate as to overbalance our Karmic debts and leave us free of future Earth-chains to go on in our spiritual progress to higher planes and states of being.

Lastly, fraters, we must not hold the thought that these Akashic Records are entirely an inert, impersonal condition, for in certain aspects, they are a definite part of the “innumerable cloud of witnesses” with which we are surrounded, as described by St. Paul. This gives a straightforward personal element to them which should cause us to realize that our every thought, word and deed comes under the cognizance of these Records, some of them very personally and individually in the instance of the Lords of Karma whose particular sphere of functioning is in Akasa itself.

Akasa and the Akashic Records constitute the medium and common ground in which the great testimony described by John, (I John, v-7-8) is given. ‘For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father the Word and the Holy Ghost; and these three are ONE.’ Note the Hermetic Unity. And there are three that bear witness in Earth, the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood: and these three agree in ONE. The Natures of the Divine Unity have been studied. The Spirit is the potent Life Principle operative in Akasa, the Water is the fluid nature which makes reflection of the Divine in Man possible; the Blood is the seat wherein the Ego of Man functions, and therefore contains the impress of the activities of the Ego. The Higher and the Lower triune unities agree and are ONE. The Akasa penetrates both Heaven and Earth, so that one Unity can bear witness in Heaven of Earth conditions. The other witness can bear witness on Earth of Heaven conditions, and all agree and all are ONE. Our Heaven is what we make it at every moment of our individual lives according to the record witness by the Akashic Records. Our Earth is just what Humanity makes it in so far as Humanity can sense the record of the Divine Three in Unity as it manifests itself or reflects itself in Akasa for Human Progress and development. Within each of us is the Akashic monitor known as CONSCIENCE which from its intimate connection with the Akashic Records and the Lords of Karma, warns us of error to be avoided, and good to be sought. It is a worthy aspiration to seek the ability to study the Akashic Records, if the search is made and the development pursued from the status of the highest spiritual motives. Such seekers will find in truth, that there is nothing hid that shall not be revealed.